

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, PN  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

THE FOLLOWING SENT FROM ICA/PANAMA ACTION USINFO INFO SECSTATE  
WASHDC DATED 10 APRIL 1978 REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO  
QUOTE

MEDIA REACTION

1. PANAMA CITY -- THE WEEKEND PRESS CARRIED A CONFUSING MIXTURE  
OF FACT, SPECULATION AND COMMENT ON THE TREATIES ORIGINATING  
IN BOTH WASHINGTON AND PANAMA, E.G. THE APRIL 8 STAR AND HERALD  
HEADLINED "PANAMA KEEPS MUM: NO COMMENT FOR NOW" OVER THE  
APRIL 7 FOREIGN MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE, WHILE ITS SPANISH  
LANGUGE SISTER LA ESTRELLA THE SAME DAY RAN A PANAMA CITY  
DATELINE TOP PAGE ONE: "INFORM TORRIJOS WILL PROTEST TO  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE," CITING OFFICIAL GOP SOURCES. ON  
SAME PAGE ARE SEPARATE ARTICLES REPORTING COMMUNIQUE FROM THE  
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CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE LIBERALS REJECING THE NEUTRALITY  
TREATY AND A WASHINGTON DATELINE BY DIANA AROSEMENA HEADED:  
"REJECT AMENDMENT PROPOSED IN SENATE" ON THE SO-CALLED BARTLETT  
AMENDMENT.

2. GENERAL TORRIJOS SPEECH AT A HIGHWAY OPENING IN LA PINTADA,  
COCLE, WAS FRONT-PAGED IN BOTH SUNDAY APRIL 19 PAPERS WITH

UPBEAT HEADLINES. IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED DOMINICAL: "FROM GENERAL TORRIJOS: "LET'S NOT BE PESSIMISTS; THIS IS A NATION THAT RISES TO A CHALLENGE." IN ITS LEAD, DOMINICAL EXCERPTS A REFERENCE TO THE TREATIES: "LET'S WAIT UNTIL THESE DAYS PASS AND SEE WHAT WILL BE THE FINAL RESULT OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE UNITED STATES AND LATER WE WILL CONTINUE TALKING MUCH MORE PROFOUNDLY AND MUCH MORE OBJECTIVELY AND WITH A LITTLE MORE THOUGHTFUL OPINIONS... WHAT YOU CAN CERTAINLY BE COMPLETELY SURE OF IS THAT AT NO TIME HAVE I BEEN DES- HEARTENED NOR HAVE I FELT INTIMIDATED BY NATIONAL EVENTS..."

3. LA ESTRELLA'S SPEECH COVERAGE FOCUSED ON DOMESTIC POLITICS WITH THE SPREAD HEAD: "NATIONAL UNITY: 'PANAMA BEFORE THE DECISION OF CONTINUING TO EXIST AS A NATION OR NOT,' TORRIJOS." ACCORDING TO LA ESTRELLA, "WITHOUT EVEN MENTIONING THE PROBLEM WHICH IS NOW PASSING THROUGH ITS MOST DIFFICULT MOMENTS, GENERAL TORRIJOS SAID THAT THIS PANAMANIAN DIALOGUE WAS BEING RENEWED AT A TIME WHEN THE PEOPLE NEEDED (CONTACT) WITH ITS LEADER AND ITS LEADER NEEDED TO KNOW MUCH MORE OF WHAT THE PEOPLE IS THINKING AND SAYING."

4. THE STATEMENT REJECTING THE NEUTRALITY TREATY BY EX-FM AQUILINO BOYD WHICH BROKE ON TV SATURDAY AFTERNOON WAS FRONT-PAGED BY LA ESTRELLA ALONG WITH THE TORRIJOS SPEECH WITH THE FOLLOWING SPREAD HEAD: "EX-FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD SAYS: (THE TREATY ON NEUTRALITY HAS BEEN CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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TO EQUIVALENT OF REJECTION OF SAME." BOYD TERMED THE NEUTRALITY TREATY AS APPROVED BY THE SENATE "INSULTING, IMMORAL AND ILLEGAL" IN A PRESS RELEASE DELIVERED "EXCLUSIVELY TO LA ESTRELLA" ACCORDING TO THE PAPER, ADDING THAT THE GOP SHOULD REJECT IT OUT OF HAND WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE SENATE TO ACT ON THE SECOND TREATY.

5. COMMENTARY AND REACTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS REJECTING THE NEUTRALITY TREATY AS AMENDED FAR OUTNUMBER MORE MODERATE STATEMENTS, HOWEVER A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNIQUE BY THE BROAD FRONT OF PROFESSIONALS (FRENTE AMPLIO DE PROFESIONALES) WAS FRONTPAGED IN ALL DAILIES TODAY APRIL 10. THE COMMUNIQUE BY THIS PRO-GOP GROUP WHICH WAS FORMED LAST FALL TO COUNTERACT THE OPPOSITIONIST INDEPENDENT LAWYERS' MOVEMENT IS SIGNED BY DR. RENATO PEREIRA, SECRETARY GNERAL, WHO ALSO SERVES AS A COMMISSIONER OF THE NATIONAL INFORMATION COMMISSION WHICH IS CHAIRED BY CHIEF NEGOTIATOR ROMULO ESCOBAR BETHANCOURT.

6. THE LENGTHY COMMUNIQUE WHICH THROUGHOUT TENDS TO DESCRIBE THE CURRENT SITUATION IN MODERATE TERMS, CONCLUDES THE FOLLOWING, "... FOR THE BROAD FRONT IT IS CLAR THAT THE DECONCINI RE- SERVATION IS ONLY ONE MORE OBSTACLE THAT WILL HAVE TO BE OVERCOME

ON THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC BATTLEGROUND WHICH, AS IS OBVIOUS TO ALL THOSE PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENT WHICH ADMIRE AND SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TOWARD NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, AND THE INTELLIGENCE AND THE DARING WITH WHICH WE HAVE CARRIED ON OUR STRUGGLE UNTIL NOW, WILL NOT GIVE OUT WITH THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATIES, ONLY THAT WITH THEM WE ARE APPROACHING COMPLETE IRRADIATION OF THE COLONIAL PRESENCE ON THE ISTHMUS."

7. THE COMMUNIQUE CONTINUES: "THE DECONCINI RESERVATION HAS SERIOUS CONNOTATIONS AS WE HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED. BUT SEEING THINGS CALMLY AND IN AN ANTI-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE WHICH HISTORY INDICATES, THE BROAD FRONT OF PROFESSIONALS MANIFESTS THAT THAT INTERVENTIONIST RESERVATION DOES NOT FRIGHTEN US IN THE LEAST. WHAT WORRIES US IS THAT CONCRETE UNCLASSIFIED

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CONQUESTS TOWARD DECOLONIZATION WILL BE RENOUNCED IN A PANIC OVER THIS AMENDMENT WHICH WAS IMPOSED BY A SENATE MINORITY AND REPUDIATED BY BROAD SECTORS OF WORLD AND EVEN AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION."

8. LA ESTRELLA AND STAR & HERALD THIS MORNING APRIL 10 FRONT-AGE A DOUGLAS RICHARD AP WASHINGTON DATELINE REPORTING THE OPENING OF TALKS SUNDAY BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE U.S. ON THE DECONCINI RESERVATION. NO FURTHER FACTS ARE GIVEN IN THE BODY OF THE STORY TO SUPPORT THE LEAD, SIMPLY THAT "SPECIAL CONVERSATIONS" BEGAN IN WASHINGTON. ITEM UNQUOTE JORDEN

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